

## Message Text

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10

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSO-00

NSCE-00 INRE-00 OMB-01 ACDA-10 /088 W

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O R 171111Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8670

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION USUN NY

USIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 4644

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR SY LE

SUBJ: JULY 17 SYRIAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHT CONTINUATION OF FIGHTING  
IN LEBANON

1. ONLY LOCAL NEWSPAPER APPEARING JULY 17, AL-THAWRAH  
HEADLINED "VIOLENT CLASHES CONTINUE ON ALL FIGHTING  
FRONTS IN LEBANON. FIRES ENVELOP BEIRUT PORT AND SUPPLY  
SITUATION DETERIORATES. AMERICAN AND BRITISH URGE REMAINING  
NATIONALS TO LEAVE LEBANON."

2. LEADING ARTICLE REPORTS THAT SECURITY SITUATION IN BEIRUT  
STILL SUBJECT OF SERIOUS CONCERN WITH CLASHES CONTINUING  
ON TRADITIONAL AXES OF FIGHTING INCLUDING ENTIRE CONFRONTA-  
TION LINE BETWEEN BAB IDRIS AND MUSEUM. BEIRUT STILL  
WITHOUT WATER AND ELECTRICITY, REPORT ADDED.

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2. FRONT PAGE ARTICLE STATED THAT AMERICAN AND BRITISH EMBASSIES IN BEIRUT HAD URGED THEIR NATIONALS TO LEAVE LEBANON IN U.S. ORGANIZED EVACUATION JUNE 20. AFP REPORT CITED THAT U.S. EMBASSY ADVISED ITS NATIONALS IT WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE PROTECTION OR SERVICES TO AMERICAN COMMUNITY AFTER JULY 19. REPORT ADDED THAT NO DETAILS HAD AS YET BEEN RELEASED ABOUT EVACUATION WHICH WOULD TAKE PLACE FROM AREA OF WEST BEIRUT CONTROLLED BY "FATAH AND JUMBLATT." SEPARATE AFP REPORT NOTED THAT USG HAD ANNOUNCED ITS INTENTION TO RECALL PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE IN BEIRUT BUT THAT DECISION REGARDING HIS DEPARTURE HAD NOT YET BEEN MADE. U.S. SPOKESMAN QUOTED AS POINTING OUT THAT DETERIORATION LIVING CONDITIONS AND UNSTABLE SITUATION IN BEIRUT WERE BEHIND DECISION TO REDUCE AMERICAN EMBASSY STAFF.

3. AL-THAWRAH ALSO CARRIED LONG ILLUSTRATED ARTICLE BY CORRESPONDENT WHO VISITED SOFAR AND TITLED "CALMNESS AND STABILITY PREVAIL IN BEAUTIFUL RESORT." JOURNALIST REPORTED HE HAD SPENT JULY 16 IN SOFAR AND HAD SEEN WITH HIS OWN EYES THAT CALMNESS AND STABILITY PREVAILED UNDER PROTECTION OF SYRIAN PRESENCE. PEOPLE OF SOFAR, HE SAID, HAILED SYRIAN EFFORT TO RESCUE LEBANON AND RIDICULED FALSE AND MISLEADING REPORTS OF CLASHES. INHABITANTS HAD TOLD HIM THAT POPULACE FROM NEIGHBORING AREAS HAD SOUGHT REFUGE IN SOFAR IN ORDER "TO ESCAPE MASSACRES AND LOOTING AND PLUNDERING IN AREAS CONTROLLED BY BANDS OF FATAH AND JUMBLATT."

4. AL-THAWRAH ALSO REPORTED THAT PRESIDENT ASAD ON JULY 16 HAD RECEIVED BRIG. UTHMAN HUMAYD, SAUDI CHIEF OF STAFF, IN THE PRESENCE OF COS SHIHABI, SAUDI AMBASSADOR AL-ZAYD AND COMMANDER OF SAUDI FORCES IN SYRIA, GENERAL BUDAYRA. ACCORDING TO REPORT, HUMAYD CONVEYED MESSAGE FROM KING KHALID AND CONVERSATION FOCUSED ON SITUATION IN LEBANON IN LIGHT OF ARAB LEAGUE RESOLUTIONS.

5. TWO EDITORIALS BOTH CITED PARALLEL NATURE OF SYRIAN POSITION TOWARD LEBANON AND ARAB LEAGUE RESOLUTIONS CALLING FOR HALTING FIGHTING, REJECTING MILITARY SOLUTION,  
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PURSUING POLITICAL SOLUTION, PRESERVING UNITY OF LEBANON AND PROTECTING PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE. WHY THEN, THEY ASKED, DOES CAMPAIGN OF SLANDER AGAINST SYRIA CONTINUE? THOSE WORKING TO ESCALATE FIGHTING, ONE EDITORIAL CONCLUDED, WERE OBVIOUSLY PART OF "THE PLOT" AND WERE OPPOSED BY ALL SINCERE PEOPLE INTERESTED IN SAVING LEBANON.  
MURPHY

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